UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

Najma Ralls,	: Civil Action No.:
Plaintiff, v.	· :
Kentwood Law Group; and DOES 1-10, inclusive,	COMPLAINT
Defendant.	: : :

For this Complaint, the Plaintiff, Najma Ralls, by undersigned counsel, states as follows:

JURISDICTION

- 1. This action arises out of Defendant's repeated violations of the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1692, et seq. ("FDCPA"), and the invasions of Plaintiff's personal privacy by the Defendant and its agents in their illegal efforts to collect a consumer debt.
 - 2. Supplemental jurisdiction exists pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1367.
- 3. Venue is proper in this District pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b), in that the Defendants transact business in this District and a substantial portion of the acts giving rise to this action occurred in this District.

PARTIES

4. The Plaintiff, Najma Ralls ("Plaintiff"), is an adult individual residing in Folcroft, Pennsylvania, and is a "consumer" as the term is defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(3).

- 5. The Defendant, Kentwood Law Group ("Kentwood"), is a business entity with an address of 5050 Palo Verde Street, Suite 113, Montclair, California 91763, operating as a collection agency, and is a "debt collector" as the term is defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(6).
- 6. Does 1-10 (the "Collectors") are individual collectors employed by Kentwood and whose identities are currently unknown to the Plaintiff. One or more of the Collectors may be joined as parties once their identities are disclosed through discovery.
 - 7. Kentwood at all times acted by and through one or more of the Collectors.

ALLEGATIONS APPLICABLE TO ALL COUNTS

A. The Debt

- 8. The Plaintiff incurred a financial obligation (the "Debt") to an original creditor (the "Creditor").
- 9. The Debt arose from services provided by the Creditor which were primarily for family, personal or household purposes and which meets the definition of a "debt" under 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(5).
- 10. The Debt was purchased, assigned or transferred to Kentwood for collection, or Kentwood was employed by the Creditor to collect the Debt.
- 11. The Defendants attempted to collect the Debt and, as such, engaged in "communications" as defined in 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(2).

B. Kentwood Engages in Harassment and Abusive Tactics

- 12. Within the last year, Kentwood contacted the Plaintiff in an attempt to collect the Debt.
- 13. Kentwood placed calls to Plaintiff's residential telephone, Plaintiff's cellular telephone, Plaintiff's work telephone, Plaintiff's mother's telephone and Plaintiff's mother-in-law's telephone in an attempt to reach Plaintiff regarding the Debt.
- 14. Kentwood identified itself a law firm to Plaintiff's mother-in-law and demanded that Plaintiff call it back as soon as possible.
 - 15. On May 10, 2012, Plaintiff first spoke with Kentwood regarding the Debt.
- 16. Plaintiff notified Kentwood that she was under the impression that her parents were still actively paying the Debt to the Creditor. Plaintiff told Kentwood that she would contact her parents to confirm whether they were currently paying the Debt, and then call Kentwood back to discuss.
- 17. Despite Plaintiff telling Kentwood that she would call it back after speaking with her parents, Kentwood continued to pressure Plaintiff during this conversation to make a payment towards the Debt, using very aggressive and rude language.
- 18. Plaintiff also notified Kentwood during this initial conversation that her employer prohibits Plaintiff from receiving personal calls to her work telephone. Plaintiff asked Kentwood to cease placing any subsequent calls to her place of employment. Kentwood responded to Plaintiff by stating that it can call any telephone number it wants to in order to reach a consumer.
- 19. Kentwood placed another call to Plaintiff's place of employment minutes after its first conversation with Plaintiff on May 10, 2012.

- 20. Kentwood told Plaintiff that she has an hour to speak with her parents and call back Kentwood, and stated that if she does not call Kentwood within the hour, then it would take legal action against Plaintiff in an attempt to collect the Debt.
- 21. Kentwood told Plaintiff that she could either pay it \$1,399.00 to satisfy the Debt or she would be forced to pay Kentwood over \$6,000.00 if Kentwood proceeded with its threatened legal action.
- 22. On May 11, 2012, Kentwood placed two more calls to Plaintiff's place of employment in an attempt to collect the Debt despite Plaintiff explicitly asking Kentwood not to contact her there. Kentwood also placed a subsequent call to Plaintiff's place of employment on May 15, 2012, in an attempt to collect the Debt.
- 23. Kentwood demanded to speak with someone "higher" at Plaintiff's place of employment to notify it that was faxing correspondence to Plaintiff's employer.
- 24. Kentwood threatened to sue Plaintiff once again, noting "give me your fax number 'cause we're [Kentwood] getting ready to file suit."

C. Plaintiff Suffered Actual Damages

- 25. The Plaintiff has suffered and continues to suffer actual damages as a result of the Defendants' unlawful conduct.
- 26. As a direct consequence of the Defendants' acts, practices and conduct, the Plaintiff suffered and continues to suffer from humiliation, anger, anxiety, emotional distress, fear, frustration and embarrassment.
- 27. The Defendants' conduct was so outrageous in character, and so extreme in degree, as to go beyond all possible bounds of decency, and to be regarded as atrocious, and utterly intolerable in a civilized community.

COUNT I

VIOLATIONS OF THE FDCPA 15 U.S.C. § 1692, ET SEQ.

- 28. The Plaintiff incorporates by reference all of the above paragraphs of this Complaint as though fully stated herein.
- 29. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692b(2) in that Defendants informed third parties of the nature of Plaintiff's debt and stated that the Plaintiff owed a debt.
- 30. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692c(a)(1) in that Defendants contacted the Plaintiff at a place and during a time known to be inconvenient for the Plaintiff.
- 31. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692c(a)(3) in that Defendants contacted the Plaintiff at his place of employment, knowing that the Plaintiff's employer prohibited such communications.
- 32. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692d in that Defendants engaged in behavior the natural consequence of which was to harass, oppress, or abuse the Plaintiff in connection with the collection of a debt.
- 33. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692d(2) in that Defendants used profane and abusive language when speaking with the consumer.
- 34. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692d(5) in that Defendants caused a phone to ring repeatedly and engaged the Plaintiff in telephone conversations, with the intent to annoy and harass.
- 35. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692e(5) in that Defendants threatened to take legal action, without actually intending to do so.
- 36. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692e(10) in that Defendants employed false and deceptive means to collect a debt.

- 37. The foregoing acts and omissions of the Defendants constitute numerous and multiple violations of the FDCPA, including every one of the above-cited provisions.
 - 38. The Plaintiff is entitled to damages as a result of Defendants' violations.

COUNT II

<u>VIOLATIONS OF THE PENNSYLVANIA FAIR CREDIT EXTENSION</u> <u>UNIFORMITY ACT, 73 P.S. § 2270, ET SEQ.</u>

- 39. The Plaintiff incorporates by reference all of the above paragraphs of this Complaint as though fully stated herein.
 - 40. The Plaintiff is a "consumer," as defined in 73 P.S. § 2270.3.
- 41. The Defendants are each individually a "debt collector" as defined in 73 P.S. § 2270.3.
- 42. The Defendants violated provisions of the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1692, et seq., which constitutes an unfair or deceptive practice under 73 P.S. § 2270.4(a).
 - 43. The Plaintiff is entitled to damages as a result of the Defendants' violations.

COUNT III

INVASION OF PRIVACY BY INTRUSION UPON SECLUSION

- 44. The Plaintiff incorporates by reference all of the above paragraphs of this Complaint as though fully stated herein.
- 45. The Restatement of Torts, Second, § 652(b) defines intrusion upon seclusion as, "One who intentionally intrudes…upon the solitude or seclusion of another, or his private affairs or concerns, is subject to liability to the other for invasion of privacy, if the intrusion would be highly offensive to a reasonable person."

- 46. Pennsylvania further recognizes the Plaintiff's right to be free from invasions of privacy, thus the Defendants violated Pennsylvania state law.
- 47. The Defendants intentionally intruded upon Plaintiff's right to privacy by continually harassing Plaintiff with excessive phone calls.
- 48. The telephone calls made by the Defendants to Plaintiff were so persistent and repeated with such frequency as to be considered, "hounding the plaintiff," and, "a substantial burden to her existence," thus satisfying the Restatement of Torts, Second, § 652(b) requirement for an invasion of privacy.
- 49. The conduct of the Defendants in engaging in the illegal collection activities resulted in multiple invasions of privacy in such a way as would be considered highly offensive to a reasonable person.
- 50. As a result of the intrusions and invasions, the Plaintiff is entitled to actual damages in an amount to be determined at trial from the Defendants.
- 51. All acts of the Defendants and its agents were committed with malice, intent, wantonness, and recklessness, and as such, the Defendants are subject to punitive damages.

COUNT IV

<u>VIOLATIONS OF THE PENNSYLVANIA UNFAIR TRADE PRACTICES AND CONSUMER PROTECTION LAW, 73 P.S. § 201-1, ET SEQ.</u>

- 52. The Plaintiff incorporates by reference all of the above paragraphs of this Complaint as though fully stated herein.
- 53. The Defendants' violations of the Pennsylvania Fair Credit Extension Uniformity

 Act constitute per se violations under the Pennsylvania Unfair Trade Practices and Consumer

 Protection Law.

- 54. The Defendants' acts were done with malicious, intentional, willful, reckless, wanton and negligent disregard for Plaintiff's rights under the law.
- 55. As a result of the Defendants' violations, the Plaintiff has suffered ascertainable losses entitling the Plaintiff to actual, statutory and treble damages.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, the Plaintiff prays that judgment be entered against the Defendants:

- 1. Actual damages pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1692k(a)(1) against the Defendants;
- 2. Statutory damages of \$1,000.00 pursuant to 15 U.S.C. §1692k(a)(2)(A) against the Defendants;
- 3. Costs of litigation and reasonable attorney's fees pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1692k(a)(3) and 73 P.S. § 2270.5 against the Defendants;
- 4. Statutory damages pursuant to 73 P.S. § 2270.5(c);
- 5. Actual damages pursuant to 73 P.S. § 201-9.2(a);
- 6. Statutory damages pursuant to 73 P.S. § 201-9.2(a);
- 7. Treble damages pursuant to 73 P.S. § 201-9.2(a);
- 8. Actual damages from the Defendants for all damages including emotional distress suffered as a result of the intentional, reckless, and/or negligent FDCPA violations and intentional, reckless, and/or negligent invasions of privacy in an amount to be determined at trial for the Plaintiff;
- 9. Punitive damages; and
- 10. Such other and further relief as may be just and proper.

TRIAL BY JURY DEMANDED ON ALL COUNTS

Dated: May 31, 2012

Respectfully submitted,

By <u>/s/ JBB8445</u>

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